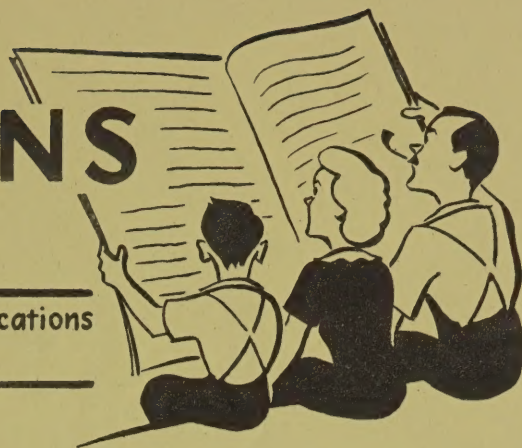


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PUBLICATIONS

News Notes

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READABLE OUTLOOK

When you find outlook or other economics material written simply, that's news. So we're pleased to be sending you a copy of Montana's Extension Circular 171, Looking Ahead with Montana Farmers and Ranchers. Mrs. Amy Cowing of the Readability Unit, Division of Field Studies and Training, estimates that it is at the 8th-9th grade reading level. This applies to the text. (We fear that the rancher would need a higher reading ability to profit much from the charts.)

When asked how they managed to write this material so understandably, Louis True, director of publications, reported that it is the result of about 20 years of cumulative insistence on readability. H. R. Stucky, extension economist and senior author, writes that some of his associates have suggested one reason why the bulletin is in 8th-9th grade language might be that 8th and 9th graders wrote it.

We think the folder grades less difficult than much other economics material because authors have tried hard to write in language farmers can understand, avoiding agricultural economics jargon and keeping sentences short.

WRITING FOR EASIER READING

The "before" and "after" of an effort to make an extension bulletin easy for farm people to read are shown in two enclosures. The "before" example is the original manuscript for Ohio Extension Bulletin 268, Liming Ohio's Acid Soils, and the "after" exhibit is a copy of the printed folder. They are going to you through the cooperation of J. E. McClintock, Ohio extension editor.

The manuscript is "fairly difficult" reading (high-school level, on a par with Harper's Magazine), Mrs. Cowing estimates on the basis of the Flesch formula. The rewritten and reorganized bulletin checks out 8th grade level, or on a par with some of the easiest reading in Reader's Digest.

How was the improved readability achieved? A comparison of the manuscript and the bulletin gives the answer. The work was done by Dr. Edgar Dale of the Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, and his associates. Dr. Dale gave advice on writing for readability at the extension publications improvement workshop, held at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, in September. We are enclosing a copy of his "recipe" for clear writing.

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